

“SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
MEDAL FOR THE DEFENSE OF FREEDOM”
for
Civilian Employees of the Department of Defense
Killed or Injured in the Line of Duty

1. Purpose: The “DEFENSE OF FREEDOM” medal is established to acknowledge civilian employees of the Department of Defense (DoD), who are killed or wounded in the line of duty. The medal symbolizes the extraordinary fidelity and essential service of the Department’s civilian workforce who are an integral part of DoD and who contribute to the preservation of national security.

2. Description:

MEDAL: The eagle and shield exemplify the principles of freedom and the defense of these freedoms on which our country is founded. The laurel is emblematic of honor and high achievement.

RIBBON: Red, white and blue are our National colors. The red stripes commemorate valor and sacrifice. The wide blue stripe represents strength. The white stripes symbolize liberty as represented in our national flag. The number of red stripes represents the four terrorist attacks using hijacked airplanes and the single blue stripe represents the terrorist attack on the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. This day, more than ever, united this country and brought to the forefront our heroic civilians.

3. Eligibility: The medal shall be awarded to any DoD civilian employee meeting the definition of “employee” under title 5 United States Code, Section 2105, and who is eligible for an award under DoD 1400.25-M, Subchapter 451, “Awards,” including employees of non-appropriated fund activities, when killed or wounded by hostile action while serving under any competent authority of the Department under conditions for which a military member would be eligible for receipt of the Purple Heart. Additionally, the Secretary of Defense has discretionary authority to award this medal to non-defense personnel based who are otherwise qualified to be awarded this medal based on their involvement in DoD activities.

4. Criteria: Eligibility criteria for the medal are aligned as closely as practicable to those for the Purple Heart for members of the Armed Forces; this medal differs from other medals in that it is not “recommended.” The employee is “entitled” to the medal if the employee is eligible under Section 3 and if the conditions or criteria in this paragraph are present. Hostile action may involve, but is not limited to, the use of conventional or nuclear weapons, chemical or biological agents, explosives, or missiles. The medal shall be awarded to employees who are killed or sustained serious injury due to hostile action

against the United States of America, or wounded or killed while rescuing or attempting to rescue any other employee or individual subjected to injuries sustained under such conditions. The wound for which the award is made must have required treatment by a medical officer, and records of medical treatment for wounds or injuries received in action must have been made a matter of official record.

5. Limitations on Awarding Medals: The medal is authorized for the incident of death or the first wound suffered under the conditions indicated above. The medal itself may be awarded only once; however, for subsequent events that would require the award of the medal, Components are authorized to select and procure an appropriate device (e.g., a star, struck from the same metal, if possible) to be worn with or on the medal. Not more than one Secretary of Defense Medal for the Defense of Freedom or appropriate device will be authorized for more than one wound or injury received in the same hostile incident.

6. Posthumous Awards: The medal may be awarded posthumously and, when so awarded, may be presented to a representative of the deceased employee's family.

7. Responsibilities and Approval. Heads of DoD Components, as defined in Section B of DoDD 1400.25-M, "DoD Civilian Personnel Management System," are delegated authority for approval of the medal and are assigned responsibility for the procurement, issuance, and administrative procedures for award of the Defense of Freedom Medal to civilian employees within their respective Components. Components are to apply appropriate and prudent screening processes, such as those used in granting other medals or awards to non-U.S. citizens, when granting this medal to eligible non-U.S. citizens.